

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the following reasons.

In the specification, the paragraph has been amended on page 1 to include a sentence previously present, but inadvertently omitted. In the October 20, 2003 Amendment at pages 2-4, applicants amended the format of the priority to claim to overcome the Examiner's objection. In doing so, the incorporation by reference sentence was inadvertently omitted. (October 20, 2003 Amendment at page 3). That sentence has been reincluded. Nothing else has changed to this previously Examiner-accepted text.

Claims

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-48 and 50-70 are pending. Claims 50-70 have been allowed and dependent claim 49 has been objected to. Claims 1-8, 10-19, 42-48 and 71 have been rejected.

By this amendment, claims 49 and 71 are requested to be canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to file divisional and/or continuation application(s) drawn to the canceled claims. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

Objected to dependent claim 49 is currently rewritten in independent format by amending claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 49 and intervening dependent claim 2. Accordingly, amended claim 1, including its dependent claims, is in condition for allowance.

Priority

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging receipt and acceptance of the new declaration. The Examiner concludes that the effective filing date of "all the present claims" is July 11, 2000. That is incorrect. With respect to the pending claims 1-49 and 50-70, these claims have an earlier priority date. The subject matter of at least independent claims 1 and 50 is disclosed, at least, in 09/455,299 filed December 6, 1999 (now U.S. Patent No.

6,692,483) and in 09/325,996 filed June 4, 1999. With respect to the previously rejected claims, at least claim 1 (before being amended) is disclosed in, at least, 08/744,002 filed November 4, 1996.

Information Disclosure Statement

An Updated Information Disclosure Statement is being filed concurrently herewith. The Examiner is respectfully requested to review the cited references, initial and sign the associated Form SB-08, and return signed SB-08 to Applicants.

Conclusion

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-2228. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 50-2228. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 50-2228.

Respectfully submitted,

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By Michele Van Patten Frank

PATTON BOGGS LLP
Customer Number: 32042
Telephone: (703) 744-7907
Facsimile: (703) 744-8001

Michele Van Patten Frank
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 37,028